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est piano-player of our day. A glance at the collection, with its wonderful array of notes, ranged up and down like the rafters of a house, is enough to show that we have no trifle to deal with. It is as if in this work Liszt wanted to disclose all his experiences, and to bequeath to posterity every secret of his playing: in no better way could he have manifested his veneration for the great deceased artist than by a work like this, so carefully worked out even to the smallest details, and reflecting the spirit of the original with perfect fidelity. If Schumann aimed rather at bringing out the poetical side of the compositions, Liszt, without neglecting that, has chosen rather to reflect its mechanical difficulties. He very rightly entitles the pieces "*Bravura Studies*," since they are just fit for playing in public as show-pieces. But there are not many who could thoroughly master them; perhaps not more than four or five in the whole world. However, the difficulty will not prevent people from attempting them. Many are glad to approach even tolerably near the highest summits of executive perfection. When we closely examine this collection, there is no doubt that its purely musical worth often bears no proportion to its mechanical difficulties. But the title "*Study*" answers for much in this case. We are to practise diligently, whatever may be the cost.

These are, perhaps, the most difficult pieces ever written for the piano, as the originals are for the violin. Paganini probably meant to express this in his charmingly short dedication, "*Agli artisti*," as much as to say, "*We are accessible to artists only*." Thus it is also with the present arrangement; none but real artists of high standing could make anything of them. From this point of view alone can they be judged. We must forego a regular analysis and comparison of the arrangement with the original; it would take too much space, and is best done with both before one. It is interesting to compare the first *Study* with Schumann's arrangement of the same, a comparison to which Liszt expressly invites us by copying the latter, bar by bar, next his own. In the Italian edition it is the sixth *Caprice*. The last number contains the *Variations* which also form the last number in the original edition, and probably suggested to Ernst his "*Carneval de Venise*;" from a musical point of view, this one is to me the most interesting of the whole; but even here, in the small space of a few bars, one finds the most prodigious difficulties, such as even Liszt himself would have to study. Whoever can master these *Variations*, so as to play them in the easy playful style which they require, and make them go like scenes in a puppet-show, may travel all over the world, confident that he will return with golden laurels, a second Liszt-Paganini.

CLARA NOVELLO.

At Leipzig, 1837-38.

Miss Clara Novello's first appearance was the most interesting occurrence this season.

She came from London, from the midst of artists of the first rank, and all of them her friends—a fact not without its worth even in Leipzig. For years I have found nothing so good as her voice—thoroughly aware of its powers, and thoroughly under control; at once full and delicate, every note as true as on a keyed instrument; the noblest delivery, a style perfectly simple and unaffected, and without a thought of display but for the music and the composer. Her own native element, in which she was born and brought up, is Handel; and this she sang so that people asked with astonishment, "*Is that Handel?*" "*Did Handel write like that?*" "*Impossible!*" Even a composer may learn much from a style like hers; it also furnishes a style for judging the artists of our time, who so often make caricatures of themselves, because they will not stay long enough at school. Before art like that of Miss Novello, the stilted style in which our singers too often endeavor to sing over our heads, utterly breaks down.

In a word, Clara Novello is neither a Malibran nor a Sontag; but she is what she is, and that of the very highest class, and no one can take it from her.

HER MAJESTY'S THEATRE.

The first representation of Beethoven's opera—the solitary work of the kind, which sufficed to place its author side by side with Mozart, the greatest of dramatic composers, and in advance of Cherubini, the one whom Beethoven himself was inclined to rank as highest—took place under unfavorable circumstances. Mlle. Tietjens had by no means recovered from her indisposition, and was not in a fit state to undertake so very arduous a task as that of representing the part of the incomparable Leonora. Her suffering was evident and painful. Nevertheless, even under these circumstances, her very impassioned and heartfelt performances could not fail to make a deep impression; and the audience, an audience that filled the house in every corner, grateful for her exertions and moved by her enthusiasm, applauded her frequently, and with genuine good will. After the magnificent quartet in the grave scene, and the duet with Florestan, which directly follows it, Mlle. Tietjens was unanimously called before the lamps. Still it was a pity she should imperil her splendid voice at a time when it stands so clearly in need of at least a brief respite from labor. Up to this moment, almost the whole responsibility of maintaining the fortunes of the theatre has devolved upon her, scarcely an evening having passed without her appearing in some opera of more or less importance. The other woman's part in *Fidelio*, the charming Marcellina, was represented in her own happy manner by Mlle. Sinico, who sang her one air as perfectly as could be wished. Mr. Santley is unquestionably the best Pizarro since Staudigl. All the overwhelming orchestral accompaniment to the fierce outpouring of revenge and malice by which the wicked Governor lets the audience into his confidence, in the same scene (perhaps the most impressive in dramatic music), could not drown the bright and penetrating tones of a voice now in its category unparalleled. Herr Rokitansky's rich and sonorous bass is exactly suited to the music of Rocco, and he gives to the personage of that rough but kind-natured gaoler a certain bluntness which reminds us occasionally of Herr Formes, whose Rocco

stood alone among the Roccos of his time. Signor Tasca is not equal to the music of Florestan, of which no Italian singer has been able to make himself thoroughly master in our remembrance—Signor Tamberlik excepted. But though the great air of the prison was a failure, the bright and telling high notes of Signor Tasca's voice, a legitimate tenor if there ever was one, were used to very considerable advantage in the duet with Fidelio, in which husband and wife give expression to their rapture at being reunited after a long separation. Here Signor Tasca justly shared the applause with Mlle. Tietjens. Signor Foli did all that could be desired in the small part of the Minister, who only appears in the last scene, when the interest of the drama is over; and Mr. Hohler might be a very good Jacquinio if he would commit the music to memory—a *sine qua non* where Beethoven is concerned. The overture, the grand No. 3 (in C)—the noblest and most perfect of the four—was superbly played by the orchestra, under Signor Arditi; but we have heard the chorus of Prisoners much more effectively sung; nor can we approve of the tenor solo, which is one of its marked features, being given otherwise than as Beethoven has indicated—that is, to a single voice.

Mlle. Christine Nilsson's second appearance was quite as successful as her first. The opera was again *La Traviata*; the house was again crowded in every part; and the most lavish applause was again bestowed on the interesting young Swede from the beginning to the end of her performance. The Alfredo on this occasion was Signor Gardoni, always welcome at Her Majesty's Theatre, where he first became known to the English public, as Ferdinando, in *La Favorita* at the beginning of the memorable year, 1847, when Mr. Lumley had first to make head against the formidable opposition at Covent Garden. Nothing could be more refined than Signor Gardoni's singing, nothing more gentlemanly than his bearing, in a part that has so very little to recommend it. There was also another change in the distribution of characters, a new baritone, Signor Pandolfini, taking the place of Mr. Stantley, as the elder Germont. Though always pleased to welcome Italian singers on the boards of the Italian Opera, we are compelled to say, in this instance, that the Englishman is by many degrees the better Italian singer of the two.

On Saturday night Mlle. Nilsson appeared for the third time, and in a new character—that of Margaret in M. Gounod's still popular *Faust*—a character which, it should be stated, she had never before attempted, even on the French stage. Mlle. Nilsson takes precisely the view of Margaret adopted by Mlle. Miolan Carvalho, the first to represent the character at the Royal Italian Opera (1863), and, as in the case of the same lady, her costume in the first scenes is closely copied from the celebrated picture by the late Ary Scheffer. The audience was the most crowded and brilliant that has for a long time been assembled within the walls of Her Majesty's Theatre—just such an audience, in fact, as many can remember on what used emphatically to be called "*Jenny Lind nights*," some twenty years ago. Whether the new "*Swedish nightingale*" is destined to attain the vogue of the old one time alone can show. We prefer not hurrying to conclusions.

SONDERHAUSEN.—Herr Max Bruch has accepted the post of Court-Conductor.